



# Solidarity

For social ownership of the banks and industry

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## FOR A WORKERS' EUROPE



See Page 5

**No to UK withdrawal from EU!**  
**Defend migrants!**



## What is the Alliance for Workers' Liberty?

Today one class, the working class, lives by selling its labour power to another, the capitalist class, which owns the means of production. Society is shaped by the capitalists' relentless drive to increase their wealth. Capitalism causes poverty, unemployment, the blighting of lives by overwork, imperialism, the destruction of the environment and much else.

Against the accumulated wealth and power of the capitalists, the working class has one weapon: solidarity.

The Alliance for Workers' Liberty aims to build solidarity through struggle so that the working class can overthrow capitalism. We want socialist revolution: collective ownership of industry and services, workers' control and a democracy much fuller than the present system, with elected representatives recallable at any time and an end to bureaucrats' and managers' privileges.

We fight for the labour movement to break with "social partnership" and assert working-class interests militantly against the bosses.

Our priority is to work in the workplaces and trade unions, supporting workers' struggles, producing workplace bulletins, helping organise rank-and-file groups.

We are also active among students and in many campaigns and alliances.

### We stand for:

- Independent working-class representation in politics.
- A workers' government, based on and accountable to the labour movement.
- A workers' charter of trade union rights — to organise, to strike, to picket effectively, and to take solidarity action.
- Taxation of the rich to fund decent public services, homes, education and jobs for all.
- A workers' movement that fights all forms of oppression. Full equality for women and social provision to free women from the burden of housework. Free abortion on request. Full equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people. Black and white workers' unity against racism.
- Open borders.
- Global solidarity against global capital — workers everywhere have more in common with each other than with their capitalist or Stalinist rulers.
- Democracy at every level of society, from the smallest workplace or community to global social organisation.
- Working-class solidarity in international politics: equal rights for all nations, against imperialists and predators big and small.
- Maximum left unity in action, and openness in debate.
- If you agree with us, please take some copies of *Solidarity* to sell — and join us!

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## Disabled workers pledge direct action

**By Janine Booth, RMT delegate and co-Chair, TUC Disabled Workers' Committee**

**TUC Disabled Workers' Conference, meeting two weeks after the general election, resolved to mobilise and take direct action — and called on the full Trades Union Congress to do the same.**

Nearly 200 delegates debated and passed a variety of resolutions and discussed issues and strategies with guest speakers.

An emergency motion about the general election from the Disabled Workers' Committee stated that "With the Conservatives promising £12 billion cuts, we can anticipate further cuts in benefits levels and entitlements, privatisation and closure of health and support services, and new attacks on our human rights, employment rights and trade union rights", adding that "The government and sections of the media will doubtless back up these attacks with an ideological assault on disabled people as scroungers, trade unionists as wreckers and human rights as expendable."

The resolution, passed unanimously by delegates, put forward a four-point strategy — working closely with the disabled people's movement to organise cam-



**Paula Peters of DPAC: "I will always be a rebel not a slave"**

paing and direct action; mobilising support for unions' campaigns and strikes; encouraging disabled people to exercise their rights as a way of defending them; and taking the initiative in pursuing this fightback rather than waiting for specific attacks.

This resolution will now be tabled to TUC Congress in September, after topping the delegates' poll.

TUC General Secretary Frances O'Grady told the conference that Tony Blair was wrong to say Labour lost the election because it was "too left wing", instead arguing that "Labour spent too much time on the Tory territory of austerity". She pledged that "If the government attacks our right to

strike, we will fight them every step of the way", but questioned on the detail of this fight, in particular

## Sharpening our politics against the Tories

**By Monty Shield**

**On Saturday 30 May, around a thousand people marched from Waterloo station to Westminster Bridge against the planned £12 billion cuts to public welfare services**

Protestors, organised by UK Uncut, hung a banner from Westminster Bridge overlooking Parliament, reading "austerity is a lie"; it was collectively painted by activists while on the bridge. The banner could be seen along way down the bank of the Thames!

Another protest, against scrapping the Human Rights Act, began at the same time. Additionally, numbers dropped quickly to only a few hundred. In contrast, the police had an especially large presence throughout!

On the bridge, the police formed an effective kettle. However, the banner remained in place for around twenty-five minutes despite the kettle.

Another anti-cuts demonstration took place in London on 27 May, the day of the state opening of Parliament. Around two thousand people marched from Trafalgar Square, down to Whitehall before returning to the square and continuing along Oxford Street. A large amount of police attempted to directly block the progress of the

whether it would include a national demonstration, she stated only that this would be discussed at the next TUC General Council meeting.

Campaign group Disabled People Against Cuts (DPAC) continues to express in action what conferences such as this express in words.

The conference reaffirmed its support for DPAC and gave a rousing reception to DPAC speaker, the tireless activist Paula Peters. Quoting Sylvia Pankhurst, Paula told delegates, "I will always be a rebel not a slave".

● Online resources:  
[www.tuc.org.uk/disability](http://www.tuc.org.uk/disability)  
[www.dpac.uk.net](http://www.dpac.uk.net)  
[www.facebook.com/groups/workersliberty.org/](http://www.facebook.com/groups/workersliberty.org/)

protesters.

On this occasion they were more overtly violent and made several arrests. However, the protest was largely a success: it engaged a lot of new activists and caused significant disruption to a central area of London, attracting much attention.

On both demonstrations, chanting mostly consisted of "Tory scum/out" rather than slogans with greater political clarity, such as "Students, workers and the sick did not cause the deficit".

After discussion with other activists, a suggestion has emerged that local activist groups could produce a leaflet for actions which they attend. The leaflet could contain an overview of the political message of the protest and list some suggestions for chants which tie in well with the political content of the action.

On the UK Uncut demo, thousands saw the protest as they strolled along Westminster Bridge and thousands more saw the protesters on Oxford Street and Trafalgar Square during the demonstration on 27 May.

If there had been activists handing out leaflets to the wider public then many more people could have become engaged in the protests and their messages.

## Nottingham against cuts

**By Vicki Morris**

**As part of the UK Uncut day of action on 30 May about 300 people marched through the city to Victoria Park on the edge of the St Ann's estate for a picnic and net-working.**

The march was organised at quite short notice at a democratic planning meeting, with input from the Nottingham and Mansfield TUC president Liam Conway.

The march attracted a diverse crowd with lots of students, and there was a friendly spirit. There were no police in sight which helped the atmosphere!

The UK Uncut "brand" could continue for a while in Nottingham. We need discussion about reviving anti-cuts groups in the city.

It is vital that the trade unions are involved in this activity.

In Nottingham we have also had a People's Assembly meeting on 19 May, attended by about 400 people. They heard Owen Jones speak, and also Christine Blower, NUT general secretary, who has failed to take the fight to the Tories despite the willingness of her own members.

There is an appetite for a fight against the new government, but it will not be mobilised through big rallies with top tables groaning with "dignitaries".

**It will take patient and democratic debates about the way forward, involving hundreds of people, and hands-on activities to train new generations in politics and grassroots trade unionism.**



# Fight Tory attacks on our unions!

**By Maria Exall, CWU and Campaign for Trade Union Freedom (p.c.)**

**The first Conservative government for 18 years will introduce a Bill to beef up existing anti-trade union laws in the UK.**

Whilst the proposed restrictions on strike action had been well signalled in advance, the inclusion of a change to union political funds was unexpected.

The Tories are demanding a 50% turnout threshold in a ballot and an additional 40% yes vote requirement in “core public services” (health, education, transport and fire services). They hope to make it impossible for unions to organise lawful strikes.

There will be new time limitations on ballot mandates which will allow employers and courts to interfere with and delay legitimate industrial disputes

even more than they do already.

Further proposals will allow bosses to bus in agency workers to cover the jobs of strikers during official action. There will be criminal sanctions on picketing the workplace to prevent the use of scab labour.

The attack on the PCS (the main civil service trade union) by the last government put a cap on the proportion of the civil service pay bill that could be spent on trade union facility time, restricted the number of union reps given full-time release and banned paid time off for trade union activities.

Now the government propose to extend those restrictions across local government and into the private sector.

There are also plans to change how unions collect their membership fees — both through individual payments and through check-off arrangements —

to make it difficult for unions to operate effectively.

These attacks together with the massive cuts in welfare benefits have one aim — a cheap workforce, with no right to withdraw their labour, no rights to a decent welfare safety, with few employment rights and even patchier trade union organisation.

Workers in unionised workplaces enjoy better terms and conditions not only because of the right to strike but also because trained trade union reps are active in the workplace negotiating, representing and promoting the wellbeing of the workforce. The solution from the bosses’ perspective is to undermine union organisation per se.

It’s all about saving money. Not satisfied that we live in a period when inequality in power and wealth is worse than it has been for over a hundred years, the bosses want to up

the ante.

Their political wing, the Tory Party, also wants to stop the funding to their only viable electoral opposition — the Labour Party. The proposal to force political levy payers in affiliated trade unions to opt *in* rather than opt *out* undermines organised workers’ collective political voice.

The same rule was in force between 1926-1946 and had drastic results. It is an ideological attack on the Labour-union link but it is also a very practical attack on a significant source of funding for Labour.

The response of the labour movement to these attacks must be to fight back — industrially and politically.

**There is no place for compromise — whether it be on the principle of trade union freedoms or accepting that state funding of political parties is the way forward.**



## Worse than capitalism

**By Tom Harris**

**The seminal radical football podcast “This is Deep Play” once made this perceptive point about football: far from being a form of escapism detached from real life, football is like a mirror, vividly reflecting everything that’s playing out in capitalist society at large.**

If you want to go to the football to get away from big business, gentrification, bigotry and corruption, you won’t be in for much luck — they’re all there. Happily, all the collective solidarities and human kindnesses, all the spontaneous moments of joy and humour will also be there, often in distorted and exaggerated form.

There is one exception to this rule, however: FIFA.

World football’s governing body is more corrupt, more opaque and unaccountable in its dealings, more obviously a totally crooked swindle, than ordinary capitalism. FIFA has spent decades acting more like a bloated crime family.

It seems like everyone knew, or felt they knew, that FIFA under Sepp Blatter, was crooked for a long time. After all, what explanation could there be for awarding a world cup to a country like Qatar if not the appeal of hundreds of millions of petrodollars.

While I’m sure Qatar has many charms, its arid desert climate is clearly not appropriate for a top-level football tournament. What’s more, report after report has revealed the appalling conditions that workers building Qatari World Cup facilities are forced to live under by their fantastically rich bosses.

The Nepalese government estimates that 157 of its citizens died working in Qatar alone. It is now thought that construction for the World Cup is killing a worker every two days.

So it has not come as too much of a surprise that US authorities have finally swooped. Under US law, corruption carried out using US banking networks count as violations of US law, no matter where they took place. So far, 14 FIFA officials and executives have been arrested, and it is expected more will follow.

This is very far from being “problem solved”. It is thought that FIFA were tipped off that they were being investigated, and it is likely that much evidence has been destroyed.

**A socialist society will see the governance of the economy, public services, and yes, football, prised from these self-serving crooks and placed under the radically democratic, collective control of all us all.**

## Labour needs a socialist candidate

**By Michael Johnson**

**After the election the Blairites were first out of the traps, hurtling into television and radio stations to give long-prepared statements, with no evidence, about how Labour had shifted too far to the left under Ed Miliband.**

But under Miliband, Labour’s approach was to accept the Tories’ argument that austerity was necessary but to promise slightly fewer cuts. In the last stage of the election campaign, the leadership bolted on some panicked, but real, social democratic pledges.

Now, even these limited ideas are facing the chop from the leadership candidates.

Andy Burnham, desperately trying to dispel rumour that he is the “union candidate” is pledging to drop the “mansion tax” policy and told an audience of business leaders that he may back further welfare cuts.

Liz Kendall says that cutting tuition fees, even to £6,000, is not a “priority”, though is agitating for the UK to reach NATO’s target of spending two per cent of GDP on defence and wants more private-sector in-

volvement in the NHS.

Yvette Cooper, meanwhile, is trying to steer a course somewhere in between, and called for “controlled and managed immigration.”

None of these leaders will be capable of winning back the millions of working-class supporters Labour has lost since 1997. None will be able to give expression to a labour movement fightback against the Tories.

The unions should not back any of the declared candidates.

Meanwhile an estimated 40,000 people have joined Labour since the election, many of them out of a desire to fight the Tories. In this context, the failure of the Labour left to find a candidate would be bad.

With left-wing MP John McDonnell not putting himself forward, and Ian Lavery inexplicably backing Andy Burnham, the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy (CLPD) is calling for soft-left shadow cabinet member Jon Trickett to stand.

**A left-wing socialist candidate is needed but even a Trickett candidacy could create some space for socialists to apply pressure and shape the leadership debate.**

## LGSM told they can’t march with the unions at Pride

**By Gerry Bates**

**The final London Open Meeting for the organisation of this year’s Pride march (Saturday 27 June) discussed the decision to separate the trade union block from Lesbian and Gays Support the Miners (LGSM).**

LGSM, following on from the popularity of the film *Pride*, has been given a position at the front of the march. But the trade unions are in Block C of the march (i.e. at the back), and way behind the prime sponsors of Pride, Barclays, Starbucks and Citi Group. Yet the TUC has also been a big sponsor of Pride, donating up to £400,000 over the years.

According to the Pride Board, the trade union bloc was too big to be at the Head of Parade! It was also

said that these firms would have floats with employees participating, many of whom were not in unions.

Clearly the Pride Board don’t want to hurt the feelings of the corporate sponsors. Starbucks, for one, is just not that friendly to trade unions!

But never let it be said that Pride is not open to everyone. UKIP LGBT has applied to join the march and has been accepted.

LGSM have told the organisers that if they can’t march with the unions at the front of the march they will march with them at the back.

**There is still time to build the trade union contingent on Pride so that we can encourage LGBT people to join trade unions, using the LGSM story as evidence of what solidarity can achieve.**

## “Left” and right make solidarity with the “People’s Republics”

**Two conferences were held last month by European far right and Stalinist left, to build support for one-party puppet regimes in Donetsk and Lugansk. Dale Street reports. <http://bit.ly/1BHGDWH>**



# The Third Camp and the Vietnam war

## Letters



**Martin Thomas' article on Vietnam and the left in *Solidarity* 364 rightly advocates a Third Camp position opposed to both the US and its allies and the victorious Vietnamese Stalinists. However the war also posed political problems for the Third Camp socialists of the time which he does not elaborate on. These issues remain relevant and, I think, unresolved today.**

A central slogan in the Vietnam solidarity movement in the UK and across Europe was "Victory to the NLF". The Vietnamese National Liberation Front (aka the Vietcong) was formed in 1960 and became the guerilla army and political organisation of the Stalinists and their allies in in South Vietnam. It became the dominant opposition to the US by the mid 60s. Its aims included national liberation in the sense of expelling the US, overthrow of the repressive South Vietnamese puppet regime and eventual reunification of the country which had been divided after the defeat of the French colonial power in 1954. Reunification meant the South joining the North, that was run by Ho Chi Minh and the Communist Party on the classical Stalinist model.

Thus the dilemma for Third Camp socialists, particularly in the US where they were involved in the quickly growing anti-war movement, was this: deeply opposed to the US presence and war, should they call for victory of the forces fighting them, knowing that they were undemocratic and would establish a class state ruling over the Vietnamese workers and suppressing their independent action?

The issue was complicated by two related issues. The NLF did have popular support, particularly in the countryside, and it grew as the war went on as a result of American action. At the same time, any forces that might have constituted an

active third force independent of both the US/Southern regime and the NLF dwindled to nothing. In the period 1963-5 there had been active opposition to the Southern regime, particularly among the Buddhist population, which combined with "neutralist" movements and discontent in the cities. The development of the American war and the strength of the NLF led to their disappearance or absorption.

The argument for supporting "Victory to the NLF" had therefore to be that, as a genuine national liberation movement fighting to defeat the US, it was pursuing progressive aims despite its Stalinism.

### DRAPER

**This was not quite the argument put forward by Hal Draper in the debate in the US Independent Socialist Clubs/International Socialists in 1969.**

He argued that the nature of the war had changed from a civil war in the South in which a Third Camp had existed and where it was right not to support the NLF, to a war of national liberation, "a new stage of the Vietnam situation" where "the element of American imperialist intervention... now determines the nature of the war... the NLF already seems to have won political power among the South Vietnamese people." This support was decisive as it meant that self-determination became equivalent to a victory of the NLF. In this second war, it was right to support that military victory, while fighting illusions about their political nature or the likely eventual outcome.

Draper's argument seems weak on two counts. Firstly, had the nature of the war changed? Milton Fisk wrote in his history of the ISC/IS that "The assessment that the war had been a civil war rather than one of national liberation till 1968 gave too much to the State Department... There was no time when these regimes were militarily or politically viable apart from the US." It had been a war for national liberation from

the start.

Secondly, it was based on a distinction between political and military support that did not make sense in the case of Vietnam: "We can give political support only on the basis of what we analyse as the real political character and real political program [of] this formation... Military support means that we prefer the military victory of one side in an armed struggle and the military defeat of the opposing side." However in the case of Vietnam the military victory of those forces was to lead directly to the imposition of an anti-working class regime precisely because of their political nature. As Don Bacheller said in criticism of the position of support "A victory for the NLF in Vietnam would in no way promote the realization of the goals of revolutionary socialists .... A victory for the NLF would make the realization of these goals in the present period more difficult..."

There were two complementary alternatives to "Victory to the NLF" as slogans. One was to focus on unconditional US withdrawal. The other on the right of the Vietnamese to self-determination. As Fisk points out, whatever line the ISC/IS took, not being skilled opportunists like their British counterparts, their anti-Stalinism diminished support in the anti-war movement.

This was neither the first nor the last time that this problem would appear for Third Camp socialists. Apart from certain basic principles such as defending working-class independence and the right to self-determination, I do not think there can be a magic formula that will cover all cases.

**Draper's method of looking (with qualifications) at historical precedents and analysing the nature of the struggle and the political forces involved therefore seems to me to be the right one, even if — despite my own nostalgia for time spent shouting "Victory to the NLF" — his argument about Vietnam seems flawed.**

*Bruce Robinson Manchester*

## It is not "business as usual" for the left

**In the wake of the Tory victory, Daniel Randall's article about how to regroup is a disappointment (*Solidarity* 364).**

The message seems to be, "not that much has changed, work harder and keep on fighting". There is no consideration of the strong possibility, that this could be the beginning of the end for social democracy in the UK.

Certainly it is difficult to see how Scottish Labour can regain its former position and without Scottish Labour's electoral weight the English and Welsh parties are in deep trouble. Proposals for boundary changes will only exacerbate this situation. Looking at the candidates for leadership the temptation to sink into despair is hard to resist.

The Labour Party now seems to be sleepwalking into "New Labour mark 2" in its obsession with netting "aspirational voters" and the so-called "middle ground". Figures in the *New Statesman* show that Labour lost most of its votes in the semi-skilled and unskilled groups of workers, traditionally strong Labour supporters and not in the so-called "aspirational" groups.

I suspect, like John Harris in the *Guardian*, that Labour's time is up. It is a party of the industrial era and, like it or not, we are now in a post-industrial era. People, of course, are still working but this work is quantitatively and qualitatively different. Zero hour contracts, precarious employment, the almost total collapse of heavy industry and the enormous changes that have come in its wake have changed our world. Society has changed and this is reflected in the vote for social democracy and its general decline.

A glimpse at the voting figures (and I suspect membership figures) for all European socialist parties demonstrates this: Greece's PASOK is in deep crisis, as is PSOE in Spain and Francois Hollande's Socialist Party. If there were elections tomorrow all three parties would be almost wiped out.

Everywhere votes and loyalties are either lost to the right (France) or to new alternatives (Syriza in Greece and Podemos in Spain).

In Sweden the once rock-solid social democratic vote was down again in 2014 – 30% from 35% in 2006, in Belgium the Socialist Party won just 11.67% of the overall vote and the Netherlands' PvdA garnered a mere 12% of the vote in 2009.

In some countries (Austria) the social democratic vote is holding at around 33.3% but at the cost of an ever more rightward drift.

Elsewhere, notably Hungary, the far right continue to hold sway and the threat from Le Pen in France is considerable. Most worrying of all perhaps is that the growth in support for Le Pen comes often from formerly solid working class areas including the former coalfields. A similar pattern, if not so well-defined, emerges when the votes for UKIP are analysed. According to one website I consulted "Between the 1950s-1960s and now, social democratic parties in northern Europe have lost about 20% of their vote." This can't be ignored and I find the analysis offered by *Solidarity* peculiarly detached from these important developments in the rest of Europe.

Too often the response in the pages of *Solidarity* seems to be that these are not serious problems we can fight back, regain the people who have drifted away and win again. This ignores many things but perhaps most important of all that these are long term, well-developed trends not overnight blips or temporary phenomena that will go away when we really start the fightback.

Daniel Randall mentions the poor performances of Left Unity and TUSC and an enduring memory for me of watching the election night coverage on TV was the pathetic spectacle of one TUSC candidate punching the air with his fist as his result was announced — he received 136 votes, less than some of the loony fringe candidates. Clearly there is no comfort to be had here. However, what about the Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory? I see no assessment of its achievement on the night.

I take no pleasure from the comments I make here particularly as I have no alternative to offer. However, an analysis of where we are now needs to start from or include a recognition of the enormous problems presented by the long term decline of social democracy and the changed world for trade unions, problems which will not go away and I think, in the case of social democracy, cannot be overcome in the long term. This calls for a radical rethink of just about everything, not another tired call for "stepping up the fight".

*John Cunningham, Adlington, Lancs.*



## AWL at Lutte Ouvrière

**Almost 20 members and friends of the Alliance for Workers' Liberty went to the festival organised by the French revolutionary socialist group Lutte Ouvrière at Presles, near Paris, on 23-25 May.**

The festival, an annual event on Whit weekend since the early 1970s, draws around 20,000 people to its combination of open-air activities, food and drink, children's activities, and political stalls and debates. Lutte Ouvrière offers stalls, and the facility to run "forums", free to other revolutionary socialist groups from across Europe, though in recent years fewer have taken up the offer.

We took the chance to meet and discuss again with comrades from groups we've long been in touch with, like L'Étincelle (France), OKDE and EEK (Greece), and others.

We were able for the first time to meet comrades from the Left Opposition in Ukraine and the Workers' Platform in Russia; we hope this will be the start of continuing discussions.





Barcelona, demonstration against job losses in Telefonica, the day before the November 2012 European general strike. Our task is building transnational working-class solidarity

# For a workers' Europe

## A proposal to the class-struggle left, from Workers' Liberty

The government intends to hold an in-out referendum on the UK's European Union membership. David Cameron is currently attempting to negotiate with other EU leaders to allow the UK government more power at the expense of the EU.

Dressed up in nationalist rhetoric — opposition to foreign migrants and the demand for “our” right to control “our affairs” — Cameron is fighting for the right of the Tory government, acting on behalf of the capitalist class, to ignore European law and regulations that interfere with profits of British capitalists.

Columnist Iain Martin, writing in the *Telegraph* on 30 May complains that Cameron's shopping list for change in Europe is too vague. Martin advocates Cameron “should at least be looking to scrap anti-competitive social and employment laws that come from Brussels and [try] to win new flexibility for the UK to do its own trade deals.” The *Telegraph* has the virtue of being plain and clear. Much of the EU legislation the political right in Britain would like to see abolished, it is in the direct interest of workers in Britain to maintain.

No doubt Cameron — unlike many in his own party — would like to see the UK remain in the EU. Cameron wants to avoid the political disruption and economic overheads of withdrawal.

However the Westminster politicians may find it difficult to manage and control the referendum result from above. And it may be that the UK will stumble out of the EU, against their wishes.

The main result of Britain leaving the EU will be a big confidence boost for the political right and the growth of anti-immigrant racism.

The drive against EU membership is being led by poisonous and divisive anti-migrant howling from some of the press. Xenophobia has an appeal; UKIP won 3.8 million votes at the general election largely by playing to fears of foreigners.

Although the precise timing and the wording of the question to be voted on are not yet clear, the political dangers should be obvious. There is already a large constituency — well-funded, with a long tradition in UK politics, that has its own political voices and access to the media — which is loudly and crudely attacking migrants' rights and using nationalism to try to pull the UK out of Europe.

In the run-up to this referendum there will be a further poisoning of British politics.

In an in-out referendum Workers' Liberty will vote to keep the UK in the EU. We will do so for reasons similar to those that motivated our call to Scottish workers to vote against independence. In general, we are in favour of fewer and weaker borders and barriers between peoples.

If the issue in the referendum had been, for example, a vote

on an EU economic treaty, we would probably have advocated abstention. It is not our job to choose between different methods of exploiting workers.

But the issue now is about strengthening borders and hostile attitudes towards other peoples; pulling the UK out of the EU will do both. It runs in the opposite direction to the creation of a federal Europe, which we favour.

The European bourgeoisies have pulled Europe together, substantially integrating Europe economically and politically. By doing so — in their own way, in their own interests — they have also expanded the possibilities for Europe-wide workers' unity. We could add many qualifications — the expansion of bureaucracy, the capitalist nature of the process of integration — nevertheless European integration is historically progressive.

To try to break up the process of integration is as regressive as trying to turn the internet off because it is run by capitalist companies, or attempting to abolish parliament without bothering to see that bourgeois democracy is replaced with something better.

Unfortunately, some of socialist left, influenced by nationalism and Stalinism, will advocate withdrawal. They will say a blow to the EU is a blow against capitalist exploitation and imperialism. But not all damage to capitalism is in the interests of the working class. Socialists are not simply anti-capitalist — we have a positive programme which we fight for, and which includes European unity.

The people who will gain from UK withdrawal are the racists who hate migrants. It makes no sense for the left to vote with UKIP and the Tory right for withdrawal, pretending we are doing so to fight racism and nationalism. That would be ridiculous.

And some of the left will flounder about in confusion wishing the question was different and trying to avoid the issue of EU membership by stressing their opposition to racism and UKIP (reasonable of course, but limited and without political traction).

We advocate the left forms a united campaign with the following aims:

- To defend migrants' rights and oppose racism;
- To vote against British withdrawal from the EU;
- To fight for a workers' Europe, based on working class solidarity.

We advocate that the left unite to fight for these aims and campaign for these ideas inside the workers' movement. And, in addition, we suggest that the labour movement learn one more lesson from the Scottish referendum debacle: that the unions and Labour Party must not join a cross-class alliance with pro-EU Tories and others. Such a bloc discredited the labour movement during the Scottish campaign.

We are open to debate on the question and will be approaching left organisations with the intention of founding such an initiative.

**Workers, unite across Europe!**

# Help us raise £15,000

Regular readers may have noticed a small, but significant, increase in strikes and workers' struggles in the past few months. It remains to be seen whether this momentum will turn into more and/or larger struggles against austerity.

Certainly, without a significant shake-up of the current labour movement, momentum could easily be squandered by union leaders.

Workers' Liberty has developed ideas about transforming the labour movement, which we fight to implement in the workplace and in the unions. Revolutionary organisations can play pivotal roles in shaping what will happen with these struggles — in the National Union of Teachers work by Workers' Liberty comrades has reshaped the left in the union and started to reorientate activists towards organising the union from the bottom up.

In Wakefield council and in Nottingham train station Workers' Liberty members have started new workplace bulletins, and we continue our work with Tubeworker and Lewisham Hospital Worker.

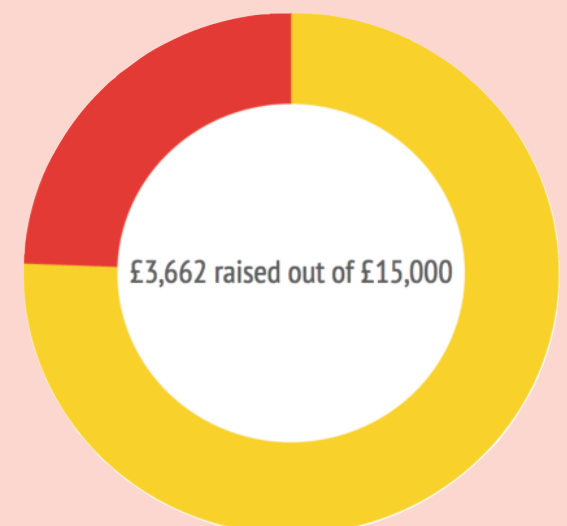
In order for Workers' Liberty to develop these ideas and fight for them in the labour movement we need office workers to co-ordinate our industrial work, to be able to support the work of our industrial bulletins, and co-ordinate strike support.

We have no big money backers. We rely on contributions from workers and students like you! So please consider:

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**Thanks this week to Jeremy, Eric, Clive, Monty and Kas. So far we have raised £3662.**





# Greece: break the stalemate

Workers' Liberty members Edward Maltby and Gemma Short went to Athens, Greece, from 25 – 29 May to meet and interview activists inside and outside Syriza. We will be publishing interviews in our paper and online soon.

**By Gemma Short**

**There are some signs of the years of austerity in Athens; building projects have been left unfinished; empty buildings are left to fall into disrepair; pavements and roads in some districts are cracked and overgrown with weeds and grass. But there is a shiny new extension to the metro, opened only two years ago, and we saw no more people living or begging on the street than might be seen on a walk around London.**

The average wage in Greece has fallen by 38% between 2009 and 2014, and pensions by 45%. There has been a 273.7% increase in unemployment since 2009, to 26% of the population in late 2014. When the economically inactive section of the population is included the percentage of people not working rises to 56.3%. Unemployment is highest amongst young people aged 15-29, rising from 21% in 2008 to 59% in 2013.

Between 2010-2013 988,000 jobs have been lost, 675,000 of those in the public sector — 20% of all public sector jobs. 86% of those out of work in Greece have been unemployed for over a year — meaning that they no longer receive unemployment benefits. In addition, 2.5 million people are not covered by social security, often because their access depended on a relative being in work. The situation created by this collapse in incomes among Greek people is frequently referred to by Syriza and others as “the humanitarian crisis”.

We met “Solidarity for all” (SFA), an organisation set up by Syriza in 2012 to support the work of various mutual-aid and social solidarity activists. It is funded by a 20% levy on Syriza MPs' salaries.

Tatiana and Christos of SFA told us that they work with organisations distributing food, providing medical care, offering free tuition to children and adults, organising anti-eviction campaigns, legal support networks, debt advice services, cultural centres, and other forms of support which employers and the state have placed out of reach to millions of working-class Greeks and migrants.

Everyone we asked described the attitude of Greek workers towards the new government as “wait and see”. Activists told us that people had low expectations of Syriza, just hoping for a let-up in attacks, and these expectations have been met. Since the 25 January election of Syriza, there have been comparatively few strikes and social struggles — the exceptions being the 24-day strike by the Piraeus port workers against the sale of the port (a struggle started under the previous government), various local campaigns and occupations against hospital closures, and a strike in the health sector on 20 May.

Since the election the government has greatly reduced the austerity measures planned by the previous administration. It has also made some small, but not merely symbolic, changes. The re-hiring of the Ministry of Finance cleaners, planned re-opening of state TV channel ERT, abolition of the €5 fee to get hospital appointments, and re-introduction of citizenship for children of migrants born in Greece.

Most organisations, even those outside of Syriza such as (the trotskyst) OKDE and some groups in (left coalition) Antarsya, recognise that the election of Syriza was a victory, and that if Syriza capitulates or fails it will be a defeat with negative consequences in the workers' movement. OKDE organises street stalls with the slogan “defend the victories of 25 January”. Yet prospects for a deal with “the institutions”, as the Troika is now called in Greece, over the country's next debt payment instalment due this week do not look good.

An interim agreement on 20 February, which allowed Greece a four month extension, saw the government reduce

the, already very modest, Thessaloniki Declaration to “four red lines” — no new cuts in pensions, no new wage cuts and mass layoffs, a halt on privatisations and no new tax burdens. In the run up to a June deal these “four red lines” are increasingly looking like just two — no new cuts in pensions and no new wage cuts.

A member of International Workers' Left (DEA) a Trotskyist group inside Syriza, told us these “two red lines” are likely to be more like “pink lines”. It is likely concessions will be made on pensions which would mean that while pensions for those retiring now, or in a few years from now, will be protected, cuts will be made to the pension pots of younger workers. The promised re-instatement of collective bargaining agreements may take place, but in watered-down form. He thinks that despite the talk of default, which he admits there may now be more substance to, a deal will be made with the creditors.

There is a fight going on within Syriza. For a long time the “Left Platform” has had around 30% of votes on Syriza's central committee. But that vote is growing. 41% voted against the 20 February deal with the “institutions”. 44% voted for a “Left Platform” motion at the last central committee meeting (held on the weekend of the 23-24 May) which called for the government to stop negotiations, stop payments of debt instalments, negotiate for part of the debt to be deleted, and to nationalise the banks.

This included big names such as John Milios — one of Syriza's chief economists — as well as members of the centre-left “53+ group”. In the end the conclusion of the central committee meeting was that any deal should respect Syriza's “four red lines”.

## UNPREDICTABLE

**For our comrades in DEA, the situation is unpredictable, with multiple possible outcomes. The Syriza leadership is able to effectively blackmail much of the left opposition, claiming that resistance to Tsipras's policies could spell the end of the government.**

Several high profile figures, such as Minister for Productive Reconstruction, Environment and Energy and “Left Platform” leader Panagiotis Lafazanis, state publicly that they will oppose a “bad deal”. Lafazanis says he will refuse to sign off on privatisations of regional airports and the train system. However comrades in DEA says it is not yet possible to predict whether all of the “Left Platform” will hold its ground.

Tsipras, and the majority leadership fraction, have a mandate from the Syriza central committee for any deal they can spin as not crossing the “four red lines”. It is likely any deal made this week will not be taken back to a central committee, but taken straight to the politburo and then to parliament. The parliamentary group is much less prone to rebellion against the leadership than the central committee — but a bad deal could still be met with resignations and protests from



**Donated medicines at the solidarity health clinic in Omonia, Athens**

MPs, including members of the majority. Some speculate that this could lead Tsipras to call a new election to form a new government — one less reliant on the left.

As much as there is a rightward pressure within Syriza to not destabilise the government, there is still large left-wing and popular pressure against implementing austerity. Comrades in DEA, OKDE and Antarsya all told us that Syriza would face political crisis, splits or collapse before it could be converted into a straightforward “memorandum party”. Through the “R network” [a faction in Syriza led by DEA], DEA has been organising public meetings with left-wing Syriza MPs and central committee members. One such meeting on 19 May, under the banner “Rupture with the lenders now!”, addressed by key Syriza figures, was attended by over 600 people, with crowds outside unable to get into the room.

## FIGHT

**One sign of the growing fight in Syriza is the increasing clamour from the bourgeois press for Tsipras to expel the left wing of the party.**

A front page article titled “Tsipras is ready for anything, even expulsions” in main bourgeois newspaper *To Vima* on Sunday 24 May called for the expulsion of left-wing intransigents, specifically DEA.

Much of the attention of the Greek media in general, and the left in particular, focusses on the stand-off between the Greek government and the international institutions of the IMF and the ECB. But the real key to Syriza's ability to resolve the humanitarian crisis, and reverse the damage of the austerity years — let alone embark on a more ambitious transformation of society — lies in the struggle between the working class and the bourgeoisie within Greece.

We met the Syriza Youth organisation's International Officer Petros Markopolous who told us he dislikes the “Left Platform” due to what he identifies as their knee-jerk anti-EUism. For Petros, not all the problems can be solved by a Grexit, but he thinks the government should be uncompromising in negotiations — if this results in a forced exit then so be it. He also told us that this should be combined with “opening up the internal front”, that the struggle is “class against class” not “Greece against Europe”.

In 2013 there were 505 super-rich Greeks, 50 more than in 2012, representing just 0.005% of the Greek population and owning a total of €60 billion, €10 million more than in 2012. This layer of the Greek population has made money out of the crisis hand over fist: to them, the Troika represented a huge support; and this social layer in turn was the firmest ally of the Troika within Greece.

Taking a stand against the EU will bring the Syriza government into conflict with the Greek ruling class. Capital controls to ensure the ruling class don't hide any more of their money outside Greece will be needed. But more than that; taxation of the rich to rebuild public hospitals and rebuild and extend welfare provision; reinstatement of collective bargaining to support workers fighting for wage increases and working conditions in the private sector; nationalisation of the banks under social control — all of these should be popularised by the left, used as slogans in their press and on demonstrations and built for with public activity.

Agitation that focusses solely on the confrontation between Greece and Europe borrows much from Greek nationalism, and in the end may repay the nationalists with interest. It is also disempowering: reducing the struggle for the destiny of Greece to a poker game between a handful of Syriza negotiators and European bureaucrats draws attention away from the class struggle in Greece and around Europe.

**To break through the current stalemate in the fight against austerity, and to galvanise the class-struggle elements in Syriza the Greek workers' movement urgently needs to once again see itself as the key protagonist, and to resume the offensive.**



ate

# A memorandum for the rich

Solidarity spoke to Petros Markopoulos, member of the Syriza Youth secretariat.

**Solidarity: People on the left in Greece tend to talk more about the conflict with European capitalists than with Greek capitalists. What do you think of that?**

Petros Markopoulos: We have to change that. If you need money, to restore the working class, the solution is not to insist on this fight of Greeks versus EU. You have to face your own local bourgeoisie. You need money to undo the last five years that were ruinous for the workers, you need to get the money back from the local bourgeoisie, to reverse the memorandum situation, to create a new memorandum for the rich. There is a technical matter of how to find this money when these companies are offshore or in Switzerland. But I am sure that if there is the political will, you can find the money.

Syriza was elected on a platform of negotiating a similar deal as the one struck to wipe out German debts in 1952. What is not said is that Germany also made the decision to have a 50% levy on the property of the richest people, to help restore their economy. It was a choice of the rich to get Germany into the war, and they had to pay for it. What we have to do in Greece is something similar. We have to not just face the outer front, but also the internal front.

The EU won't give us the money. Maybe they will give a little ground, not because they want to help us but because they don't want to destroy the Eurozone. But it is the internal front where we will find the money to support the working class. 500 companies who made profits during the crisis, we should take 10% of their bank account, right away. You also need to reorganise the state because the Greek state is not fit to fight tax evasion by the rich. For the rich, tax evasion is a game.

You have to attack the heart of the wealth. You have to restore the laws guaranteeing collective bargaining. These laws are fundamental to a socialist programme and for a redistribution of wealth and power and undoing the reforms of the memorandum years.

**S: What do you think most members of the party and members of the public would think of those proposals?**

PM: I think party members would agree. But there is a fear of opening the internal front, because it is the hard part. I think the public would be positive. People understand what's going on. You work ten hours a day, you get paid so little, and they see that their boss is having a great life, with his great Jeep, while you struggle.

If the government insists on the outer front, then Greeks will think that that is the real problem. If every day all that you hear is that Schäuble is bad, that Lagarde is bad, then that's what people will be interested in. You have to change the situation, to show people that the problem is not just the ECB leaders. OK, they are part of the problem, because they represent the capitalists of the EU. But you have to show people the other enemy, who is near you. You see him every day.

**S: Do you think that the Syriza leadership will open up the "internal front"?**

PM: I think that this is what is at stake right now. I think that that is their intention, but the pressure of the state bureaucracy, of the media, is very great.

We have to say that, in the negotiations on the outer front,



Protest against outsourcing contractors at a hospital in Athens

there are people in Greece, who are on the other side. That we are not all together as Greeks in this negotiation. That the rich now want the EU to succeed against a Left government; that there are people boycotting this procedure, that there are people who have profited all these years, and now they have to pay. Then you have to bring the bills, and then after creating the legal basis for that, you have to activate the party, the trade unions, and people, to demand what belongs to them.

**S: What will happen if Syriza capitulates and implements a memorandum?**

PM: I think there will be total demoralisation. It will be very bad. People on the left will keep fighting, but it will really only be to save the honour of the left, and those fights will not be able to really change things. The majority of people in Greece might have fought over recent years – but they didn't become communists. Many of them, in their consciousness, are conservative, they fear losing their jobs, losing what they have and so on. They've given Syriza a chance, but if Syriza fails, then I'm worried that there will be a bad situation, with the far-right gaining power.

**S: John Milios has said that "the class struggle also goes on inside the party". Do you agree with that? Do you think that is happening now?**

PM: I agree entirely with John Milios. There are people in the leading group right now, doing the negotiations, who still believe in the radical process. There are also people who are afraid of taking the fight so far, and who want a more conservative approach, to keep the power for now, get a more moderate agreement, and then see later. The issue is that the control that the party has over the government is limited. We were not ready for that. What we need to do is to reorganise the control of the government by the party, and to ensure that what the party decides is what the government does.

**S: In the Sunday edition of *To Vima*, there was an article advocating the expulsion of the left wing of Syriza, specifically DEA. Do you think that this is possible?**

PM: No. That would mean the end of Syriza. The plan of the ruling class now, in the EU and in Greece, is to have Syriza pass a new memorandum bill, without the Left Platform, but with Potami, and maybe PASOK. I believe that this plan has no relation to reality. This plan would mean the end of Syriza. It would not be Syriza any more. I am not in the

Left Platform, but I could not be a part of a party that did such a thing. I think there is no such plan from Tsipras. Unfortunately, there are always people who would perhaps consider that. But it cannot be the view of the majority, including in the leadership.

You regard Left Platform and DEA as the radical wing of the party and the leadership as reformists. I think that Tsipras and a part of the leadership is radical, and intends to take things to the limit. Maybe I'm wrong. We'll see. Our MPs cannot vote for a third memorandum – they cannot go back home and say, "OK, you voted for us and we carried on doing what the last ones did".

**S: In the weekend's CC meeting, the Left Platform reports that they had 44% of the vote. What do you think of the Left Platform?**

PM: The CC said, if there is a dilemma between money owed to loans and money owed to pensions and wages, we will pay the pensions and wages. For me that is enough. The way I saw the Left Platform text, it was not much different. There are also many people in the majority supporting a harder line. The thing that the Left Platform brought was not much different from that. With the Left Platform, what I find more problematic is their line on Grexit. I don't know what DEA says about that, but the Left Current is totally for a Grexit. Lapavistas's theory, for example.

**S: DEA's line is for "no sacrifices for the Euro".**

PM: OK, but then why co-operate with the people who call for a "national way for development"? A national way to development means peace with the EU and peace with internal enemies. It is development which would happen on the ruins of the working class. I can't reconcile myself with that. If we think of Grexit as forced by the EU, then I am ready for that. But I think that they would not take that step. Kicking Greece out would damage the Eurozone. It's a matter of having a strong negotiation inside the Eurozone, even using default inside the Eurozone, applying pressure to the ECB. Or else we fail, and then we see. We may need to come back with a more radical programme.

**We should say that regardless of what happens in the negotiations, we will implement our programme. But in fact we put our whole programme into the negotiations. That was a mistake.**



# The left and the general election

## The Left By Harry Glass



**The post-mortem on the 2015 election ought to rage on the British left, though it is doubtful whether there will be much contrition from the main protagonists.**

Rightly, assessments will examine how the ruling classes' first team did it, the limitations of Labour's leadership and politics, why the Liberal Democrats collapsed, UKIP's four million votes, the SNP's tsunami and the Green ascendancy. But one unavoidable question is the responsibility the left for this class-wide defeat.

The left might appear marginal, but it is not irrelevant. The left is a political school for young people, an organiser of protest and an alternative voice even where the echo seems faint. What the left said and did around this election matters for socialist renewal.

The dismal vote attained by candidates to the left of Labour suggests their approach is flawed. TUSC garnered scarcely half a percent in the 135 constituencies where it stood, less than 300 votes per candidate on average and just over 36,000 overall. It was funded partly by a £50,000 donation from an old man's will. TUSC performed worse than the Socialist Alliance did in 2001, winning half the votes while standing a third more candidates.

The picture is no better for Left Unity. Eight SLP candidates in Wales got just over 1%. The rest — the WRP, SPGB, Scottish Socialist Party, Alliance for Green Socialism and various others — mostly failed to get more than a fraction of a percent.

Left activity was not however completely irrelevant to the outcome. In a dozen places, TUSC stood candidates where the Tories held onto the seat by a few hundred votes. In four cases — Bolton West, Gower, Plymouth Moor View and Southampton Itchen, the Tories took seats from Labour. In Gower, the Tory margin of victory was just 27 votes, while TUSC picked up 103. TUSC also stood in a handful of mar-

ginal seats where the Tories held the seat narrowly against Labour. In Croydon Central, the Labour candidate lost by 165 votes while TUSC garnered 127.

Elsewhere, TUSC stood candidates in places nearby or alongside marginal constituencies, where a few more resources might have tipped the balance. In Derby North, a decent Labour MP lost by just 41 votes, while in Derby South TUSC got 225 votes. Their choice of constituencies was far more about their own convenience than any calculation about the best outcome for workers.

TUSC activists should not console themselves with slight increases in Coventry, Tottenham and a handful of other places. They made no breakthroughs and barely matched previous results. Of course no one knows whether these voters would have transferred to Labour. In some marginal constituencies like Hendon, Labour still lost. But the intervention of left activists in a few marginals could have deprived the Tories of their majority.

### IDEOLOGY

**There is a wider sense in which the left bears some responsibility for the current balance of political forces: the ideological front. This is a more diffuse, but is still discernable. It is evident on crucial political issues such as the rise of nationalism, the role of the Greens and the issue of Europe.**

The SNP filleted working class politics in Scotland after getting a huge leg-up from the left, which has swallowed their faux-social democracy and helped them dissolve class into nation in the name of "anti-imperialism". Almost the entire left sold independence to workers in Scotland over the last two decades and thus paved the way for the SNP.

Some left activists are the most belligerent campaigners for independence, dubbing Labour as "quislings" and traitors, and poisoning political debate. Some like the Radical Independence Campaign made it their mission to drive Labour out of Scotland, gifting the fruits to the SNP. Some like Tommy Sheridan took the next logical step and called for an SNP vote. The chameleons in the Socialist Party and SWP re-

coiled in horror, having gone nine-tenths of the way with him.

The Green Party is backed by Socialist Resistance and various others as some kind of left force. Yet it is a bourgeois party, funded mostly by small business, celebrities and well-off individuals. The Greens are often a rest home for tired ex-lefts who prefer the comforts of frozen leftish commonplace to the hard battle to transform the existing labour movement. Green Left is infused with Stalinist politics, parroting nonsense about Latin America and the Middle East without serious reflection. Green councillors routinely vote for austerity. And in this election the Greens played a spoiler in at least 10 seats (and perhaps as many as 30), which helped the Tories get in.

A further issue is Europe. The drumbeat for EU withdrawal has been banged by large sections of the left since the 1970s, conniving with the reactionary backwoods English nationalists to spoil the ground for international solidarity. Far from taking votes from UKIP, they have made EU withdrawal a respectable bipartisan issue, despite the evident drawbacks for workers here and across the rest of Europe.

The left aspires to represent the working class, but in this election it largely devoted its meagre resources to a pantomime performed mostly without an audience. Worse, it did so largely on an "anti-this and anti-that" lowest common denominator rather than making propaganda for socialism. Their intervention was not about building a broader left vehicle for revolutionary regroupment, but a cobbled-together amalgam of hostile grouplets, barely able to debate each other's ideas properly.

Instead of throwing themselves into serious electoral interventions, planting their small lever at points where it might actually heave greater forces, they put sect-building fetishes above the working class.

**The alternative was to organise a Socialist Campaign for Labour Victory. This gave the "vote Labour" call a critical edge, appealing to trade unionists and other workers to vote on the basis of their class interests and to prepare to fight any incoming government.**

## Listen to the secular!

By Martin Thomas

**Pretty much all the left press other than *Solidarity* has denounced the election court decision against Lutfur Rahman, mayor of Tower Hamlets (in East London), and most of the left has backed Rabina Khan, Rahman's ally, for the new mayoral election on 11 June.**

Does the left press reckon that Rahman didn't do what the court disqualified him for doing? Or that he did do it, but it was all right? It's hard to tell. I don't know if the writers in the left press even read the judgement.

If they did read it, then probably, like me, they were annoyed by the style of the judge, Richard Mawrey — pompous, self-satisfied, arrogant. The judgement is full of show-off side-comments. The Labour Party leadership has suspended left-winger Christine Shawcroft on the basis of one side-comment in the judgement suggesting (wrongly, and irrelevantly to the case before Mawrey) that Shawcroft supported Rahman in the polls against Labour.

But probably most judges are pompous, self-satisfied, and arrogant. Yet often they can sum up evidence competently. Often they know that if they don't do it competently, they will be rebuked when the case is taken to appeal, as Rahman, a lawyer himself, is taking his case.

In a previous case, Mawrey found in favour of George Galloway's Respect group and against the Labour Party. Galloway's speech applauding that judgement is published in full on the Socialist Worker website. Mawrey's findings cannot be dismissed out of hand.

Mawrey found that charges of intimidation of polling stations, payment of canvassers, and impersonation of voters were not proved "beyond reasonable doubt". But other charges were. Rahman had made false allegations against his opponent (the offence for which Labour right-winger Phil Woolas had his election ruled invalid in 2010). Rahman was

guilty of "bribery of the electorate" via redistribution of grants to Bangladeshi community groups which would back him. And he had organised "undue spiritual influence".

The left press has dismissed the last charge as anti-Muslim prejudice. But the judgement is explicit that there is nothing unlawful about imams, in their capacity as citizens, publicly backing Rahman. Unlawful is saying or suggesting that it is a religious duty to vote one way, or a damnable sin to vote the other way — the sort of thing which Catholic priests in Italy did, to boost the Christian Democrat vote after 1946 and until the decay of religion made it counterproductive.

The British law against "undue spiritual influence" dates from 1883. Its previous uses were in Ireland when still under British rule. The law was not, as some in the left press have suggested, a means to avoid the election of Catholic-backed nationalists. The British government had made its peace with the Irish Catholic church long before that. The conciliation is usually dated from the Maynooth Grant of 1845. The charges brought under the law were of priests declaring it a religious duty to vote against nationalists less in favour with the Church, such as the Parnellites (1890-1900) or Healy's All for Ireland League (1910).

If Rahman's clerical allies did something like the priests did in Ireland back then, or in Italy in the 1950s, then there is good reason to find the election invalid. If there is strong counter-evidence, on that charge or the others, then Rahman and his allies should publish it.

We know that Rahman has a soft-left Labour background, that Labour expelled him in a rigged-up summary execution, that he is close to the hierarchy of the East London Mosque. We know that the East London Mosque is one of the biggest in the country, built with large Saudi aid, and linked to the Islamic Forum of Europe and the Young Muslim Organisation, which are in turn linked to Bangladesh's Islamist party, Jamaat e-Islami.

Those facts are documented in many books such as Innes



Richard Mawrey, pompous, but maybe not wrong

Bowen's *Islam in Britain*, reviewed by Matt Cooper in this paper in *Solidarity* 233.

It is also a fact that more secular-minded Muslims and Bangladeshis in the area find the religio-political power of the ELM/ IFE/ YMO complex overbearing.

**Those background facts mean that Mawrey's findings cannot be dismissed out of hand. To dismiss them out of hand is to let down the more secular-minded Muslims and Bangladeshis in Tower Hamlets.**



# Labour and UKIP

By Matt Cooper

**UKIP's overall third place in votes in the 2015 general election is terrible news.**

That one-in-eight voters chose a party, which has thrived in a culture of anti-politics and disillusion by wrapping an ill-defined core of neo-liberal policies in bright anti-immigration colours, is a tragi-comic symptom of the awfulness of British political culture.

The left should not overestimate the significance of UKIP's reactionary bile. In many ways it remains an external faction of the Conservative right harking back to a semi-imagined Thatcherite-Conservative heyday. Its success was limited. That UKIP won only one seat is not simply because of the unfairness of the British electoral system, but because they won only 12.6 per cent of the vote.

Although much has been made of UKIP coming second in 120 seats, in nearly all of these seats they were a poor second. A five percent swing to UKIP would represent a further massive jump in their popularity but would deliver them only two more seats. A 10 per cent swing would be needed for them to win anything more.

Many Labour right-wingers have argued that UKIP has attracted many one-time Labour voters who will need to be won back for Labour. This is often allied with a "Blue Labour" view that Labour needs to copy UKIP's and the Conservatives' anti-immigration policies, along with New Labour themes of being the party of business and aspiration. But the view that UKIP has eaten into Labour's vote has little basis in reality.

UKIP's success in the 2015 election has not been at the expense of Labour's 2010 vote, nor did it win a large section of the collapsed LibDem vote that might have otherwise gone to Labour. Of course, this has to be understood in the context of Labour doing badly in the 2010 election when it won only 29 per cent of the vote, and in 2015 Labour failing to significantly improve on that result. Putting Scotland to one side, in England and Wales Labour managed only to improve its vote by 3.5 per cent, despite the LibDems losing two-thirds of their vote. But UKIP are not the reason why Labour did not do better.

To get to grips with what happened in the election it is necessary to look at the circulation of votes between the parties, particularly from which parties UKIP won votes. There are no definitive figures for this but opinion poll and analytical data sheds some light on this.

In order to understand the circulation of votes, it helps to consider a group of 100 people. In the 2010 election 36 would have voted Conservative, 29 Labour, 23 LibDem and 3 UKIP. In 2015, 37 voted Conservative, 30 Labour, 8 LibDem and 13 UKIP. (This ignores changes in turnout, although voters who had not voted in recent elections were probably an important constituent of UKIP's vote).

Where did UKIP's votes come from? The evidence is that of their 10 new votes won in 2015, between 3 and 5 came from the Conservatives, 2 or 3 from LibDems, 2 or 3 from other parties (primarily the BNP) and only 1 or 2 from Labour. Labour probably lost more votes to the Conservatives than to UKIP, but made this up by gaining 6 of the 23 people who voted for LibDems in 2010. Thus, nationally, it would appear Labour is leaking a few votes to UKIP, not haemorrhaging support.

Nor is it the case, as is often suggested, that UKIP won votes from Labour in their "northern heartlands". I have looked in detail at one Labour "heartland" area, the 28 seats in the north east. While it is certainly true that UKIP did well across the region, averaging 17 per cent of the votes, this was not at the expense of Labour which increased its average vote across the region from 44 per cent in 2010 to 48 percent in 2015.

By using a model based on the 2010 result in individual seats and the above circulation of votes, it is possible to see whether the votes in individual seats changed in different ways to what is happening nationally. This shows that Labour won more votes than the national circulation of votes would predict. Where UKIP did better than expected, Labour tended to do better too and to a much greater extent, probably because both parties benefitted from the collapse of a large LibDem vote. The strong correlation with UKIP doing better was with the Conservatives performing worse than expected (although the Conservatives increased their vote a lit-



tle in the north east, they did not benefit from the collapse in the LibDem vote as they did elsewhere). In short, UKIP's success in the north east is at the expense of the Conservatives.

To deepen this picture I looked at UKIP's top twenty second-place seats. The picture here is that the Conservatives won less votes than the circulation of votes nationally would suggest across most of these seats and lost out particularly badly to UKIP in safe Labour seats. Labour, on the other hand was largely unaffected by UKIP in seats they held (with the odd exception, notably Hartlepool) but lost votes in Conservative held seats. Labour had only moderate losses to UKIP in areas where it was already weak.

Furthermore, the weakness of the UKIP vote is shown by the impact of Conservative campaigning. Not only does it appear that the Conservatives won waverers back from UKIP late in the campaign with its Labour-SNP "coalition of chaos message", but in its key marginals where the party poured in huge resources and effort, the Conservatives were largely successful at minimising the votes they lost to UKIP.

What are we to understand from this? As I argued in a review of Ford and Goodwin's book on UKIP, *Revolt on the Right* (see *Solidarity* 324) just because UKIP's electoral base is working class (and remained so in the 2015 general election), this does not imply that the people who vote for UKIP are "Labour left-behinds." The evidence from Labour seats in the north east suggests that these are people who have previously voted Conservative or in some cases BNP and to a lesser extent LibDem (it is also likely that some of these people have not voted for any party in the recent past).

It is likely that some of these people voted for the Blair's New Labour in 1997 but subsequently peeled off. It is a fair guess that these voters do not identify with the labour movement and feel little working class solidarity, rather they see themselves as English and hard-done by. At the same time, they believe they are badly represented by the Conservatives, and probably not only on the issues of immigration and Europe.

The overall context of this is a long-term decline in Labour's vote. With the exception of the Blair years, Labour's vote has not been above 35 per cent since 1979. The political defeat of the Labour Party after 1979 was followed by the labour movement's industrial defeat in the first half of the 1980s. The New Labour project put Labour back in power not through reversing these defeats, but by accepting them. Blair appealed to voters at least in part convinced by Thatcherism on that basis. Gradually in the elections in 2001, 2005 and 2010 this electoral bloc disintegrated. Those who talk of the need to win UKIP voters "back" to Labour are, in many instances, looking to rebuild this bloc.

It is possible that UKIP fortunes will fade, not only since their tendency to in-fighting will re-emerge but because the Cameron's programme of "blue collar Conservatism" is tailor-made to appeal to UKIP voters. For the left, UKIP is part of the problem of diminished and battered working class consciousness.

**Only through building the struggles and self-confidence of the working class can working-class politics be rebuilt in Britain.**

• More on the sources, statistics and modelling behind this article at <http://britishcontemporaryhistory.com/in-the-news/ukip-2015/>

# What cost fossil fuel subsidies?

**Climate Change**  
By Paul Vernadsky

**Fossil fuel capital continues to avoid paying the costs of its industry for air pollution and other health hazards, effectively receiving more in subsidies than the total health spending of all the world's governments, according to a new IMF report.**

*How Large Are Global Energy Subsidies?* Published last month found that fossil fuel companies are benefitting from global subsidies of \$5.3 trillion (£3.4 trillion) a year, equivalent to \$10 million a minute every day.

More than half the figure is money governments are forced to spend treating the victims of air pollution and the income lost because of ill health and premature deaths. The figure is higher than a earlier IMF estimate, because data from the World Health Organisation shows the harm caused by air pollution is much higher than previously thought.

Massive coal subsidies reflect substantial undercharging for its environmental impacts — coal is the most carbon-intensive and air pollution intensive energy product. The IMF states that "no country really imposes meaningful taxes on coal use from an environmental perspective." Petroleum is the next most heavily subsidised product, with the projected subsidy remaining at 1.8% of global GDP in 2015 despite declining petrol prices.

The biggest single source of air pollution is coal-fired power stations and China, not surprisingly given its population and reliance on coal power, provides \$2.3 trillion of the annual subsidies. The next biggest fossil fuel subsidies are in the US (\$700 billion), Russia (\$335 billion), India (\$277 billion) and Japan (\$157 billion), with the European Union collectively allowing \$330 billion in subsidies to fossil fuels. The fossil fuel subsidies massively exceed global subsidies for renewable energy, which are far smaller at \$120 billion a year.

The UK is no exception to the fossil fuel subsidy bonanza. An Environmental Audit Committee report at Westminster in 2013 showed that energy subsidies in the UK were running at about £12 billion a year — mostly directed towards fossil fuels. Last year Friends of the Earth calculated that the coalition government's tax breaks were worth over £3 billion to the fossil fuels industry. These figures do not include the wider societal impact of fossil fuels on human health and the environment, as the new IMF data does.

Scrapping fossil fuel subsidies would make a dramatic contribution to tackling climate change. The IMF says it would reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 17%. However Vitor Gaspar, the IMF's head of fiscal affairs (and a former Portuguese finance minister) still wants to make working people pay for these changes, arguing that "energy prices remain woefully below levels that reflect their true costs."

Simply scrapping subsidies and putting up prices in a "freer" market would not solve all the issues. In fact in the short run it would force millions of workers into energy poverty. Cuts to fossil fuel subsidies have to be combined with massive public investment in alternative energy resources and democratic ownership and control over energy pricing — to ensure workers do not pay for climate policies.

**But no one should fall for the argument that fossil fuels are a cheaper alternative to renewable sources, once the total costs are taken into account.**

**Massive coal subsidies reflect substantial undercharging for its environmental impacts**





# IDEAS FOR FREEDOM 2-5 JULY BIRKBECK COLLEGE, CENTRAL LONDON

# IMAGINING THE FUTURE

## Have you ever imagined...

...what our workplaces would look like if they were run by the people who work in them?

...what industries would look like if they were run for social need, not profit?

...what education would be like in a classless society?

...a world where fossil fuels were a thing of the past?

...if our society were ruled by solidarity and democracy, not profit?

Then come to Imagining the Future.

Ideas for Freedom is a festival of socialist ideas and discussion, hosted by Workers' Liberty. It is an opportunity to explore through talks, film showings, workshops and debates, ideas about how our world works, and how we can fight for a better one. The theme of our event is visions of a socialist, egalitarian, democratic future and how to fight for it.

## BUY YOUR TICKETS

Tickets bought before 13 June: £33 waged, £17 low-waged/student, £6 unwaged

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Free accommodation and creche (register before 13 June)

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## THURSDAY 2 JULY



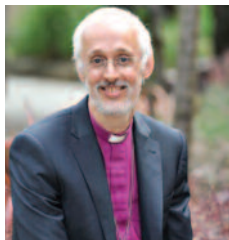
6pm. Walking with Sylvia. A radical walking tour of East London in the footsteps of communist feminist Sylvia Pankhurst  
bit.ly/WalkWithSylvia

## FRIDAY 3 JULY

Picnic and films in South London. Meet at New Cross Gate station at 13:00

7pm, University College London. "Love thy neighbour or class struggle?"

Rosie Woods (AWL) debates David Walker, Bishop of Manchester.  
bit.ly/BishopDebate



## SATURDAY 4 JULY

10.45am Registration

12 noon Opening plenary: Imagining the Future, with Martin Thomas (Workers' Liberty), Ruth Cashman (Workers' Liberty and Unison activist), and Gemma Short (Workers' Liberty)

2.50pm Workshops

- A History of the Future with Richard Barbrook, author of *Imaginary Futures*
- If workers ran the rails: what would workers' control of transport look like?
- Trotsky's bridge to the future: the transitional programme with Liam Conway
- Revolutionary women and the first world war with Jill Mountford
- Climate Change and Class Struggle with Paul Hampton

4.50pm Workshops

- Trade Unions and Revolution, with Daniel Randall
- Should socialists be for withdrawal from Europe? Debate with Michael Calderbank
- Anti-semitism and anti-Muslim racism in Europe with Yves Coleman of Ni Patrie, ni frontières
- Socialism, Utopian and Scientific*, with Stuart Jordan
- How to jump-start your union: with Gemma Short,



in the USA, with Steve Wood

- What would a democratic education system look like? With teachers Kate Harris and Jade Baker

6.30pm Workshops

- Has Socialism a Future? Free-market academic Dr John Meadowcroft debates Ruth Cashman
- Visions of the Future in Film and TV, with Dan Higginbottom and Clive Bradley
- Class struggle and the art of Futurism with Ellie Clarke
- Hell No, We Won't Go: the fight against the Vietnam war

**"REAL GENEROSITY TOWARD THE FUTURE LIES IN GIVING ALL TO THE PRESENT"**  
**ALBERT CAMUS**

8.15 Fundraiser for Rainbow International LGBT activist fund

## SUNDAY 5 JULY

10am Workshops

- Thomas More's *Utopia* and Tudor Britain with Cath Fletcher, historical advisor to the BBC's Wolf Hall

- Free speech and class struggle with Nick Cohen, journalist, and Cathy Nugent, editor, *Solidarity*

- For a workers' voice in politics; working-class political representation after the election, a panel debate
- Capitalist Futures, with Martin Thomas

- Socialism, Feminism and Secularism with Algerian feminist Marieme Helie Lucas



12.55pm Workshops

- The End of Work? Technology and the future of socialism with Nick Srnicek, Aaron Bastani and Bruce Robinson
- The Vietnamese Trotskyists, with Omar Raii
- The Conquest of Bread*, with Daniel Randall
- Climate change and the future of Energy, with Dave Elliott and Dave Kirk
- The Awami Workers' Party and class struggles in Pakistan with Rehan Khushi

2.20 Break

2.30 Workshops

- Trotskyism, Past Present and Future with Sean Matgamna
- The far left in Northern Ireland with Marc Mulholland and Liam McNulty
- Turin 1919: when workers seized the factories, with Martin Thomas and Becky Crocker
- What would socialist America look like? with Elaine Johnson
- Old and New Directions in Socialist Feminism, a presentation by Women in Workers' Liberty

4pm Closing Plenary





## Southern rail pay deal

**Train drivers for Southern rail will vote on a new pay offer, after they voted by 91% and 95% for strikes and action short of strikes to win a better deal.**

The strike votes, which saw turnouts of around 85%, followed the rejection of the company's initial pay offer of a 2.65% increase even against the recommendation of officials from the drivers' union ASLEF. Such resounding votes against union recommendations are rare anywhere in the labour movement, and show a clear strength of feeling amongst Southern drivers to win a better deal.

Strike plans were suspended, however, after Southern made a revised offer, involving a back-dated pay increase of RPI + 0.25% from October 2014 (approximately a 2.65% increase at current RPI rates), followed by a 3.3% pay increase from August 2015, and a further 3.16% increase from April 2016.

A Southern driver told *Solidarity*: "The deal looks good at first glance but is actually pretty bad if you look at the dispute as a whole. The initial offer was

2.65%. That's been rejected by the membership in a referendum, and then they voted 91% in favour of striking against it. The new offer is.... 2.65% again. But ASLEF are recommending acceptance.

The deal now involves an extra few percent next year, which Southern have been adamant all along was something they did not have the power to offer. It takes Southern drivers' salaries up to about £49,000, but that is still lower than many London-based Train Operating Companies (TOCs), and will be quite a lot lower by the time we actually see the increase, when those other TOCs will also have had at least one pay deal. This is a real opportunity to catch up with wages elsewhere, and the offer proves quite clearly that Southern have been bullshitting all along and are quite scared of action now. The decision to not press the point is really rather ridiculous."

**The referendum on the deal concludes on Monday 8 June. ASLEF officials are once again recommending acceptance.**

### Other industrial news



**Council workers in Barnet struck again on 1-2 June in ongoing dispute over outsourcing. More: [bit.ly/BarnetStrike](http://bit.ly/BarnetStrike)**

**Homelessness support workers in Glasgow meet to decide next steps — [bit.ly/GlasgowHSW](http://bit.ly/GlasgowHSW)**

## Recycling workers protest sackings

**A rally was held at Shire-green Recycling Plant in Sheffield on Sunday 31 May in support of GMB members who have been sacked or threatened with dismissal in the last month.**

The issues at the site, ongoing for several years, include working conditions, pay, and zero hours contracts. Recently, new grievances have arisen over the bullying of disabled staff. In defense of these members a wildcat strike was called; as a result of this, the GMB

reps were sacked.

A rally outside the plant (the first of several planned) was attended by 70 people, including UCU and PCS members.

**Speakers included Harry Harman, the recently elected Labour MP for the area, who addressed the allegations of corruption surrounding the charity organisation set up to run the site and made a statement of his support for returning outsourced operations to council control.**

# Tube unions plan strikes

**By Ollie Moore**

**The four unions organising on London Underground (LU) are preparing to ballot their members for strikes.**

The dispute is over pay and changes to terms and conditions relating to the proposed 24-hour running ("Night Tube") in September 2015.

Bosses made a two-year pay offer — a 0.75% increase in year one, followed by an increase pegged to RPI in year two. Also offered is a non-consolidated, one-off payment of £250 for all staff when Night Tube is introduced, followed by a further £250 payment in January 2016 if company targets are met. Drivers, signal workers, and track workers have been offered an additional £250.

RMT, ASLEF, TSSA, and Unite have rejected the offer, insisting that the pay award does not reflect increases in the cost of living,

and non-consolidated one-off payments are not adequate compensation for the impact that moving to 24-hour running will have on many workers' work-life balance, and health.

*Tubeworker* bulletin has argued that demands for more time off work must be central to unions' claims in the dispute. Scientific studies have shown that shift working, particularly sustained night working, are detrimental to workers' health.

RMT is also re-balloting its members who work on stations for further strikes in its campaign against plans to cut nearly 1,000 frontline stations jobs and impose new rosters and working arrangements. LU has already begun closing ticket offices, and plans to close every office by the end of 2015. Cuts are also ongoing elsewhere, such as the LU training department, with design commissions already under way for driverless trains.

The union struck twice as part of this dispute in 2014, winning some concessions from the company, but lost momentum since an overtime ban and planned strikes in October 2014 were called off.

The decision to ballot station workers only, rather than members in all grades (who were balloted when the dispute was first launched in November 2013), represents a narrow-

ing of the dispute. *Tube-worker* argues for the union to remind drivers, engineers, and other non-stations workers of the significance of the dispute for all grades and areas, in order to rebuild an all-grades focus.

**Timetables for the intended ballots are yet to be announced. Strikes involving all four Tube unions are almost unprecedented.**

## DLR cleaners strike

**Workers employed by contractor Interserve on the Docklands Light Railway (DLR) struck from 27-29 May, demanding a decent pay deal.**

Interserve is a multi-billion pound company with an enormous portfolio of contracts across the railway industry, providing cleaning and other services to various railway operators, including Keolis Amey Docklands (the pri-

vate consortium which runs the DLR on a contract from Transport for London).

**RMT is also in dispute with Interserve on London Underground and Network Rail over issues including short, and non-payment of wages, bullying and harassment of staff by managers, and the victimisation of union reps.**

# Network rail strikes suspended

**By Ollie Moore**

**Rail union RMT has again suspended strikes in Network Rail.**

Strikes, involving both RMT and smaller rail union TSSA, were planned for 24-25 May, but both unions suspended the strikes after Network Rail made a re-

vised pay offer.

The new deal, which reduced the length of the agreement from four years to two, offered a 1% increase in the first year, followed by 1.4% in the second, rising to 2.1% if unions agreed to various restructures.

However, consultation with reps and members in RMT returned overwhelming opposition to the new deal, and the union named new strike dates, for 4-5 and 9-11 June. Many Network Rail reps and activists were frustrated that the union's leadership suspended the strike for such meagre im-

provements, especially when the action had such a solid mandate.

On Monday 1 June, Network Rail made a second "revised" offer, promising a 2% increase in year one, followed by an increase pegged to the Retail Price Index (RPI) in year two. In response, RMT again suspended its planned strikes. A meeting of RMT Network Rail reps on Friday 5 June will discuss the revised offer.

Smaller rail union TSSA did not reinstate its strikes, and is balloting its members on the new deal, in a vote due to conclude on 13 June.

Unite, which has a very small number of members at Network Rail, is also now consulting its members on the deal, and says it will move to a full strike ballot if the deal is rejected in a referendum that closes on 10 June.

**Workers' Liberty members are working with activists from across the labour movement to promote a statement of solidarity with the dispute, which can be found online at [supportnetworkrail-strikes.wordpress.com](http://supportnetworkrail-strikes.wordpress.com). To add your name, please email [backtherailworkers@gmail.com](mailto:backtherailworkers@gmail.com).**

**Reject the deal! We can win more!**  
[bit.ly/RejectDeal](http://bit.ly/RejectDeal)

## National Gallery protest

**Workers fighting privatisation at the National Gallery are striking for another 10 days.**

On Saturday 30 May they held a rally against the privatisation in Trafalgar Square, and on Monday 1 June activists with "BP or not BP" protested in the gallery against oil-giant Shell's sponsorship deal with the gallery and in solidarity with sacked PCS rep Candy Udwin. Activists marched through the gallery carrying a banner

saying "kick out Shell, reinstate Candy!"

Also on Monday 4 June national gallery strikers joined striking council workers in Barnet on picket lines and in a special screening of *The Emperors' New Clothes*.

**The gallery has just announced that it will now be paying the London living wage — but neglected to mention that is as a result of union pressure!**

• [bit.ly/Nat-Gal](http://bit.ly/Nat-Gal)

## London Met strike

**Unison members at London Met university have voted by 77.6% in favour of strikes against job cuts.**

UCU members at the university struck on 21 May but Unison members were still awaiting the result of their ballot. Both unions will strike together on Thursday 4 June, and will picket the university governors' "strategy meeting".

**Labour MPs David Lammy and Diane Abbott have publicly supported**



**the campaign to save 165 jobs at the university. So far over 1000 people have signed a petition against the cuts.**

• [bit.ly/LMUstrike](http://bit.ly/LMUstrike)  
• Interview with Unison Branch Secretary: [bit.ly/LMUInterview](http://bit.ly/LMUInterview)





## Victory for Lewisham academies fight!

**By a Lewisham Teacher**

**On Monday 1 June the academy orders for the three Lewisham Prendergast schools were rescinded.**

This is a huge, and well deserved victory for the campaign.

Over the past few months teaching and support staff unions, parents and students have campaigned tirelessly to oppose the academisation of the three schools using strikes, demonstrations, meetings and legal challenges. Strikes planned for 3 and 4 June have been withdrawn.

The National Union of Teachers (NUT) branch made sure they were prepared in advance, and did not leave long gaps between governors' announcements and strike days which could have demobilised members.

Instead, the union was organised on the ground to

hear about threats of academisation early and able to ballot members and organise a strike on 12 February to coincide with the day governors of the Prendergast Federation met to decide whether to press on with academisation plans.

Other teaching unions and support staff unions balloted soon after to join the strikes.

### COMMUNITY

**On every strike day the unions organised lively picket lines and demonstrations targeting the Leathersellers' headquarters.**

The NUT consistently involved parents, students and the wider community in the campaign, including with several marches on routes which passed the school sites. They demanded that the schools run a parental ballot and forced the debate into the public arena.

A legal challenge from a parent caused the federa-

tion to rescind the academy order for one of the schools (Hillyfields). The legal challenge was upheld because the staff governor at the school didn't vote for academisation. The federation, however, continued to push on with its plans to academise the other two schools, Vale and Ladywell Fields, despite staff governors at those schools voting against academisation, until the announcement this Monday.

On Thursday 14 May, around 200 people attended a debate between David Sheppard, Executive Head of the Prendergast School Federation, and Martin Powell-Davies, Secretary of Lewisham NUT over the proposed academisation of the three Prendergast schools. Despite the debating society atmosphere and the fact that speakers from the floor were only supposed to ask questions it was clear that the vast majority of those who spoke were against the academies.



The only obvious exception was some members of Senior Leadership from a near by academy, Haberdashers. Sheppard clearly stumbled when challenged on his refusal to hold a ballot of the parents at the schools, limply replying "well UKIP are in favour of

referendums so..."

This may not be the final word on academy plans at the schools. The Department for Education will want to find a way for the Prendergast schools to start the academy process over again.

**In a post on the Stop**

**Academies in Lewisham blog campaigners vowed to continue until the governors of all three schools withdraw their academy plans altogether.**

**Keep in touch with future activities: stopacademiesinlewisham.org**

## Strikes against LeSoCo cuts



**By Gemma Short**

**UCU members at Lewisham and Southwark College (LeSoCo) will strike on Thursday 4 June in their campaign against job cuts and course closures.**

Workers voted by 85% for strikes to stop the loss of up to 175 jobs in a £7 million cuts package. The cuts will also see the closure of the Camberwell site of the college. Picket lines will be held on Thursday morning and a rally will be held from 11-12 in Friendly Gardens, just off Lewisham Way.

When the UCU branch met in May it agreed to a series of escalating strikes in June.

On 15 April staff were called into a meeting by the college's principal-designate, Carole Kitching, who announced the cuts, but were not given the option of asking questions. Staff in Unison and UCU believe the cuts will have a devastating effect on the college and on local communities.

### SAVE

**The notion that the cuts will "save" the college is farcical.**

Despite the cuts to teaching and support staff, senior management will be gaining another post!

The restructure will also create new posts. The precedent, as seen in Lambeth college, is that these jobs will be on worse terms and

conditions than current jobs.

A lively community solidarity campaign has sprung up, with involvement from students at the college.

The campaign held a lobby of the college governing body on Tuesday 19 May and a fundraising social on Thursday 21 May. The campaign will also be holding a public meeting on 10 June to inform the community about the cuts and put pressure on college management.

Protests have also taken place at the Camberwell site with students holding placards saying why they need their college.

**Lively community campaigns alongside strikes will be needed to see off cuts.**